(54) Titre : JEU DE BILLARD ET BOITE
(54) Title: BILLIARD OR POOL GAME AND RACK THEREFOR
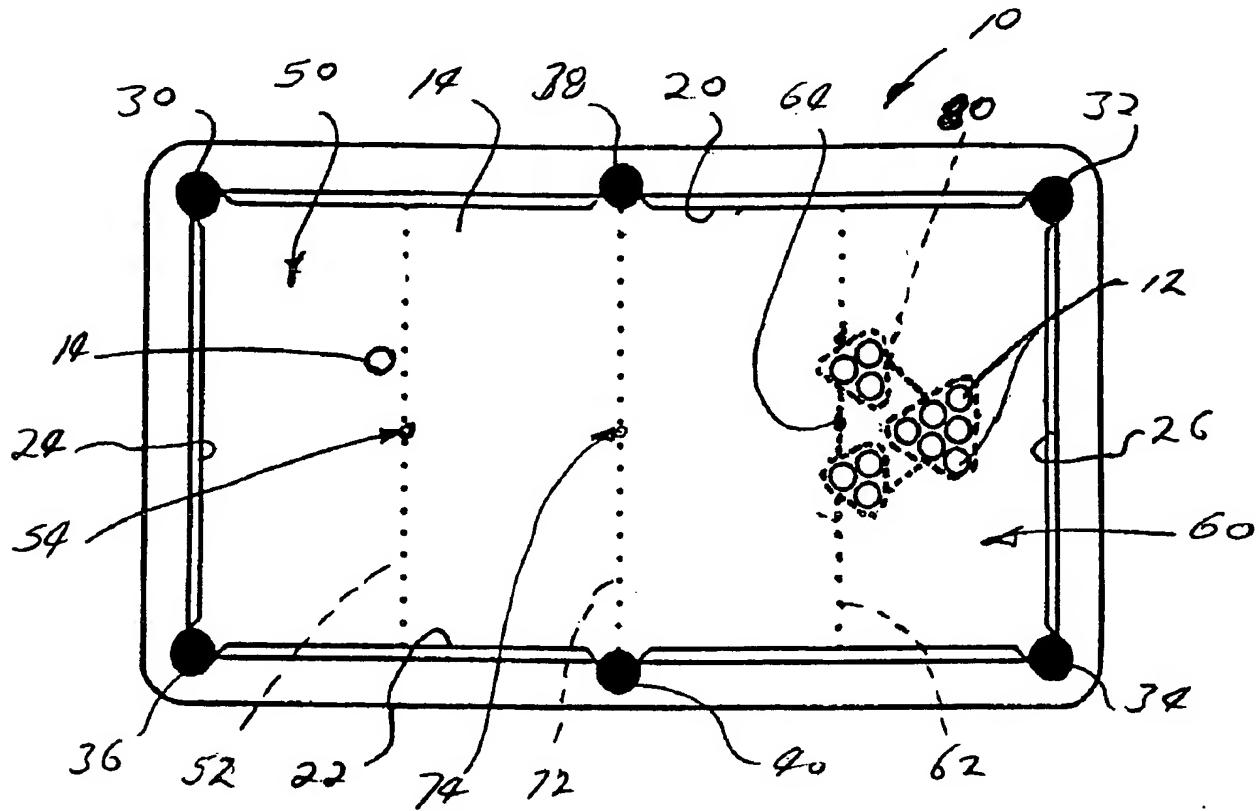
(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A unique ball rack for use in setting up balls for playing a pocket billiards game. The ball rack sets the balls up in three distinct groupings. Further a new method of playing a pocket game is disclosed, the game utilizing 12 object balls and a cue ball. The overall object of the billiard game is for a player to continue pocketing each object ball and all the object balls in the fastest time possible while being timed. Play can then move on to one or more other players, the winning player being the one that pockets all object balls in the fastest time.

BILLIARD OR POOL GAME AND RACK THEREFOR

ABSTRACT

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BILLIARD OR POOL GAME AND RACK THEREFOR

Field of the Invention

The invention relates to a pocket pool or billiard game played on a conventional table with a set number of object balls and unique rules. The balls are set up by a unique and novel ball rack.

Background of the Invention

Pocket billiards is traditionally played on a rectangular table having a playing surface usually one half as wide as it is long. Tables consist of 6 pockets, one at each corner and one at the centre of the two longer sides or rails of the table. There are many different games played on such tables that use a variety of rules and numbers of balls. The balls are consistent in size and are small enough to be able to enter the pockets. These "object balls" are used basically as targets, a cue ball, propelled by a cue stick, striking one or more object balls to further cause the object balls to enter one or more pockets.

Conventional billiards games, like "8 ball", use 15 object balls, which are racked in a single triangularly-apertured rack. A variation of the game of "8 ball" is a game called "9 ball" where only 9 balls are used and racked in a diamond configuration. Another pocket billiards game is called Snooker which involves using a larger table and 21 object balls.

In all of the above games, participants alternate play, one player continuing until he misses a shot and then the other player taking over until he misses a shot. Points according to the value or number of the ball are recorded and the one with the highest score after all the balls are sunk is declared the winner. These games can take extended periods of time when one of the players is not playing and although competitive for very skilled players, does not provide effective competition for low or medium skilled players.

Accordingly, it would be advantageous to provide a new billiard game that is faster and can be more competitive than previous billiard games.

Summary of the Invention

The invention seeks to provide a new billiard game which is faster and can be more competitive and has a novel scoring system.

Further the invention seeks to provide a new billiard game utilizing a unique combination of object balls and a very unique arrangement of racking the object balls for initiating play.

Further still the invention seeks to provide a novel rack for use in the new game.

Yet further the invention seeks to provide a new billiard game that incorporates different strategies not prominent in previously created billiard games.

More particularly, the applicant's invention relates to a fast moving, highly competitive game utilizing 12 balls with a unique way of scoring. The object of the game is to pocket all 12 object balls in the shortest amount of time. The object balls are racked so that three balls, in a triangle shape, are immediately in front of the foot string, adjacent to the foot spot of the table. Another group of three object balls are on a mirror image spot, on the other side of the foot spot and a group of 6 object balls are triangularly positioned so that the apex is directly behind the foot spot.

The object of the game is to break the racked arrangement of balls and sink all 12 of the object balls, in no particular order, in the shortest period of time. The game is timed, starting when the cue strikes the cue ball and ending when the final object ball is pocketed and the cue ball stops moving. Subject to the rules of the game, the best time is declared the winner.

The game however is automatically lost if certain rules are broken, such as, the cue ball being pocketed, the cue ball or any object ball being touched with any part of the player's body and any object ball being touched by the cue. Other rules determine loss of play as set forth herein.

There is a great number of different billiard games with different approaches and strategies. However, this "12 Ball Shootout™" game, so called due to the number of balls used and the rapid shooting required in order to achieve a good time has few drawbacks as it is wide open but also not without

challenges in view of the time factor. Any given game can result in a better time than previously achieved times that seemed unbeatable.

The game can be played by beginners and novices, but is also challenging to professional players. More skilled players would tend to have lower times, on average, than less experienced players, however anyone can achieve a highly competitive time during any given game as the object balls need not be hit in any particular order and luck may place a part where a shot results in more than one ball being sunk at one time. The fact that the "12 Ball Shootout" game is a race against time heightens the competitiveness and suspense of the game. Record times can be set and may be challenged by anyone in the world.

The unique rack sets the balls up in such a manner that it is more difficult to scatter all the balls in an initial break.

In one aspect, the invention pertains to a rack for object balls in playing a billiard game comprising a body defining at least two apertures in a predetermined spacial relationship, the apertures for containing object balls in setting up the object balls on a billiard table to start the game.

Another aspect provides a kit for playing a pocket billiard game with a cue ball on a pocket billiard table having pockets, comprising a set of 12 object balls, a rack for racking the object balls, the rack consisting of three open apertures, two of the apertures each for containing a predetermined number of object balls and the third aperture for containing a greater number of object balls than the predetermined number, at least one of the two apertures being in front of and laterally offset of the third aperture and a time-piece capable of keeping time to the nearest 100ths of a second.

Still further the invention pertains to a billiard game and method of playing, the game played on a billiard table having a playing surface defined by two side rails and two end rails, the playing surface having a head end and a foot end and having a plurality of pockets associated with corners and rails of the table. The game comprises a plurality of object balls, a cue ball and a rack for the object balls, wherein the object balls are racked with the rack at the foot end in an array having a plurality of separate array groups of object balls, the game being initiated by striking the cue ball at the array groups of object balls from the head

end and play continuing with the same player until the player pockets all the object balls in no particular order using the cue ball without defaulting, in the shortest period of elapsed time from the time of initially striking the cue ball.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a top view of a conventional billiard table illustrating the elements of the billiard table and the positioning of the object balls for the start of the game of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the unique rack associated with the game.

FIG. 3 is a top view of the rack of the invention.

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken along line 4 - 4 of FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the rack of the invention.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of the rack with balls in all three pockets.

FIGS. 7, 8 and 9 are top views of the modified racks illustrating different peripheral configurations of a rack and different spacial relationships and orientations of the apertures for holding balls.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment of the Invention

Table

Referring to FIG. 1 there is illustrated a top view of a conventional billiard table 10 illustrating the positioning of the racked object balls 12, (the rack being shown in dotted lines) and the standard components of a billiard table including cue ball 14. The billiard table 10 is generally rectangular in shape having a playing surface 16 covered with felt, two side rails 20, 22 and two end rails 24, 26. End rails 24, 26 are commonly referred to as a head rail and a foot rail.

The billiard table 10 has four pockets 30, 32, 34 and 36 positioned at the respective corners of the table and two side pockets 38, 40 midpoint on side rails 20, 22 respectively. All the pockets are sized for the receipt of object balls 12 as part of the game as more fully described hereafter.

The head area 50 of the table 10 is defined as that area between the head rail 24 and an imaginary head string line 52 bisecting the distance from the corner pockets 30, 36 to the side pockets 38, 40 along both side rails 20, 22. The head spot is defined as the midpoint of the head string line 52.

The foot area 60 is similarly defined as that area between the foot rail 26 and an imaginary foot string line 62 bisecting the distance from the corner pockets 32, 34 to the side pockets 38, 40 along both side rails 20, 22. The foot spot 64 is defined as the midpoint of the foot string line 62.

An imaginary center string 72 bisects the table surface 14, extending between pockets 38, 40 through center spot 74.

FIG. 1 illustrates the positioning of the object balls 12, twelve in number and shows the novel rack 80 in dotted lines which encloses 12 object balls 12 about the foot spot 64.

Rack

Turning to FIGS. 2 through 6, rack 80 can be made of any suitable material such as wood, aluminum or plastics although plastic is preferred as the rack can be easily molded of plastic material such as ABS. Rack 80 has base 82 and three apertured sections 84, 86, 88 with two apertures, 94 and 96, each adapted to hold in position, three object balls and layer aperture 98 adapted to

hold in position, 6 object balls. The apertures 94, 96, 98 are defined respectively by inner vertical peripheral walls 104, 106, 108 with complementary exterior walls 114, 116 and 118 extending vertically downwardly and flaring outwardly to peripheral flanges 124, 126 and 128 which merge with flange portions 130, 132, 134 of base 82. Base 82 has walls 140, 142, 144 intermediate the apertures and merging with base flanges 130, 132 and 134 respectively.

The base flange 130 has an indentation 150 for alignment with foot spot 64 for positioning the racked balls on table surface 14.

FIG. 4 illustrates a sectional view of the rack along line 4 - 4 of FIG. 3 whereas FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the rack.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view illustrating object balls held by the rack.

FIGS. 7, 8 and 9 illustrate racks of different peripheral configuration and racks with different spacial relationships and orientations of the ball apertures. In FIG. 7, the rack 160 has plate 162 with ball apertures 164, 166, 168 and notch 170 comparable to notch 150 in Fig. 3. The peripheral configuration is basically circular. Fig. 8 shows rack 180 of generally squarish configuration having plate 182 and ball apertures 184, 186 and 188, smaller apertures 186, 188 being in vertical spacial relationship and both to one side of larger aperture 184. The modification in FIG. 9 illustrates rack 190 with separate ball aperture structures 192, 194 and 196 joined together by interconnecting pieces 202, 204, 206, the smaller ball aperture structures 194, 196 being slanted so the apices are directed inwardly. Each of the structures 180 and 190 also have notches 210, 212 for lining up the racks with a foot spot 64.

It will be apparent that various further modifications of the spatial relationship of the ball apertures, the orientations thereof relative to each other and the peripheral configurations of the rack may vary significantly within the concept of the invention.

Game

To start the game, a player would position cue ball 14 anywhere between rack 24 and head string line 52, strike the cue ball with a cue stick (not shown) and cause the cue ball 14 to strike the object balls 12 and scatter them about the table. Timing of the game begins the moment the cue stick makes

contact with the cue ball. The player then proceeds to attempt to pocket all of the object balls 12, in no particular order, in the shortest time possible. The player must however, wait for the cue ball to come to a complete stop before the next shot is attempted. The player need not announce the location in which the object balls will be pocketed and more than one object ball may be sunk on one shot. Timing of the game stops after the last object ball is pocketed and the cue ball comes to a complete stop.

There is an automatic loss of game as a result of one of the following mis-cues:

(a)   the cue ball 14 is itself pocketed;

(b)   the cue ball 14 or any object ball 12 is touched by any part of a player's body;

(c)   any object ball 12 is touched by the cue stick, (not shown);

(d)   the cue ball 14 or any object ball leaves the boundaries of the pool table 10;

(e)   the player attempts a shot without at least one foot touching the floor;

(f)   the cue ball 14 is struck by a part of the cue stick, (not shown), other than its tip;

(g)   the cue ball 14 is struck by the cue stick, (not shown), more than once during the same shot attempt;

(h)   the cue ball 14 is struck so that it jumps over an object ball 12;

(i)   the cue ball 14 is struck while it is still moving.

When the game is played, a time piece capable of keeping stop time to the nearest 100th of a second is desired and can form part of a kit including the object balls and rack for sale to persons wishing to play the game.

It will be apparent that more sophisticated means may be provided to time play including optical or sound means to initiate a time piece at the start of play.

While the present invention has been described with respect to the preferred embodiment of the invention for the purposes of disclosure, it will be recognized by those of ordinary skill in the art that some modifications or changes

can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the claims appended hereto.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1.   A rack for object balls in playing a billiard game comprising:

a body defining at least two apertures in a predetermined spacial relationship, said apertures for containing object balls in setting up the object balls on a billiard table to start the game.

2.   The rack of claim 1 wherein there are three apertures, one of said apertures being configured to hold more object balls than each of the other two apertures.

3.   The rack of claim 2 wherein said one aperture is configured to hold twice as many object balls as each of the other two apertures.

4.   The rack of claim 3 wherein said one aperture is configured to hold 6 balls and each of the other two apertures is configured to hold 3 balls.

5.   The rack of claim 4 wherein said rack has a front and back and the configuration of each aperture is substantially triangular, with each aperture having a respective forwardly directed apex, the apex of said one aperture being rearward and intermediate the apices of the other two apertures.

6.   The rack of claim 5 wherein said body has a base portion integral with a plurality of peripheral walls defining each of said three substantially triangular apertures, said base portion having edges joining said plurality of peripheral walls adjacent a mid-section of adjacent walls, the base edge extending between the walls of said other two apertures having a notch therein.

7.   The rack of claim 4 wherein said rack has a front and back and the configuration of each aperture is substantially triangular, with each aperture having a respective forwardly directed apex, said one aperture being to one side

of the other two ball apertures which other two apertures are vertically in line with each other.

8.   The rack of claim 4 wherein said rack has a front and back and the configuration of each aperture is substantially triangular, with each aperture having a respective forwardly directed apex, the apex of said one aperture being rearward and intermediate the apices of the other two apertures and the apices of the other two apertures slanting inwardly toward each other.

9.   A kit for playing a pocket billiard game with a cue ball on a pocket billiard table having pockets, comprising:

          a set of 12 object balls;

          a rack for racking said object balls, said rack consisting of three open apertures, two of said apertures each for containing a predetermined number of object balls and the third aperture for containing a greater number of object balls than said predetermined number, at least one of said two apertures being in front of and laterally offset of said third aperture; and

          a time-piece capable of keeping time to the nearest 100ths of a second.

10.   A method of playing a billiard game on a billiard table having a playing surface defined by side rails and end rails and having pockets associated with the playing surface and said rails, comprising:

          racking object balls on a foot end of said table adjacent a foot spot, said balls being racked in a defined array having a plurality of array groupings;

          initiating the game by a player striking a cue ball, with a cue stick, from the area behind a head string line associated with a head spot and targeting the arrayed object balls with the cue ball;

          said player continuing to strike the cue ball from any point on the table at which it is temporarily stationary and at least one of the object balls so as to pocket at least said one object ball, so as to pocket all object balls as quickly as possible in the shortest period of time, subject to losing play of the game due

to a defined mis-cue.

11.   The method of playing the game according to claim 10 wherein the balls are racked in an array having three array groupings, two of the array groupings having fewer object balls than the third array grouping.

12.   The method of playing the game according to claim 10 wherein the said two array groupings each have three object balls and said third array grouping has 6 object balls.

13.   The method of playing the game according to claim 10 wherein said two array groups are forwardly and laterally spaced from said third array group.

14.   A method of playing the game on a pocket billiard table comprising the steps:

(a) providing a collection of 12 object balls;

(b) arranging said object balls in a predetermined configuration upon said table, a first group of 3 object balls being arranged in a triangle, a second group of 3 object balls being arranged in a triangle laterally adjacent to first group of 3 object balls and a second group of 6 object balls being arranged in a triangle placed intermediate and rearwardly of said first and second groups;

(c)   striking said cue ball with said cue stick while simultaneously initiating a time piece to cause said cue ball to strike said arrangement of said object balls, thus breaking said arrangement;

(d) continuing to strike said object balls with said cue ball until each object ball is pocketed subject to losing play of the game due to a defined mis-cue; and

(e)   assessing elapsed time of play when the last object ball has been pocketed and the said cue ball stops moving, thus ending play.

15.   The method of claim 10 or 14 wherein there is an automatic loss of game as a result of one of the following mis-cues:

(a) the cue ball is pocketed;

(b) the cue ball or any object ball is touched by any part of a player's body;

(c) any object ball is touched by the cue stick;

(d) the cue ball or any object ball leaves the boundaries of the pool table;

(e) the player attempts a shot without at least one foot touching the floor;

(f) the cue ball is struck by a part of the cue stick other than its tip;

(g) the cue ball is struck by the cue stick more than once during the same shot attempt;

(h) the cue ball is struck so that it jumps over an object ball; and

(i) the cue ball is struck while it is still moving.

16.   A billiard game played on a billiard table having a playing surface defined by two side rails and two end rails, said playing surface having a head end and a foot end and having a plurality of pockets associated with corners and rails of the table, said game comprising a plurality of object balls, a cue ball and a rack for the object balls, wherein the object balls are racked with said rack at the foot end in an array having a plurality of separate array groups of object balls, the game being initiated by striking the cue ball at the array groups of object balls from the head end and play continuing with the same player until said player pockets all the object balls in no particular order using the cue ball, without defaulting, in the shortest period of elapsed time from the time of initially striking said cue ball.

17.   The game of claim 16 wherein the array of object balls is defined by the rack having three apertures, each aperture being in a substantially triangular configuration, with two of said apertures being capable of holding an equal but fewer number of object balls than held by the third of said apertures.

18.   The game of claim 17 wherein said two of said apertures hold 3

object balls each and said third aperture holds 6 object balls and wherein, when object balls are racked by said rack, three array groups are defined, said two of the array groups having 3 balls each being in front of and laterally of an apex of the third array group having 6 object balls.
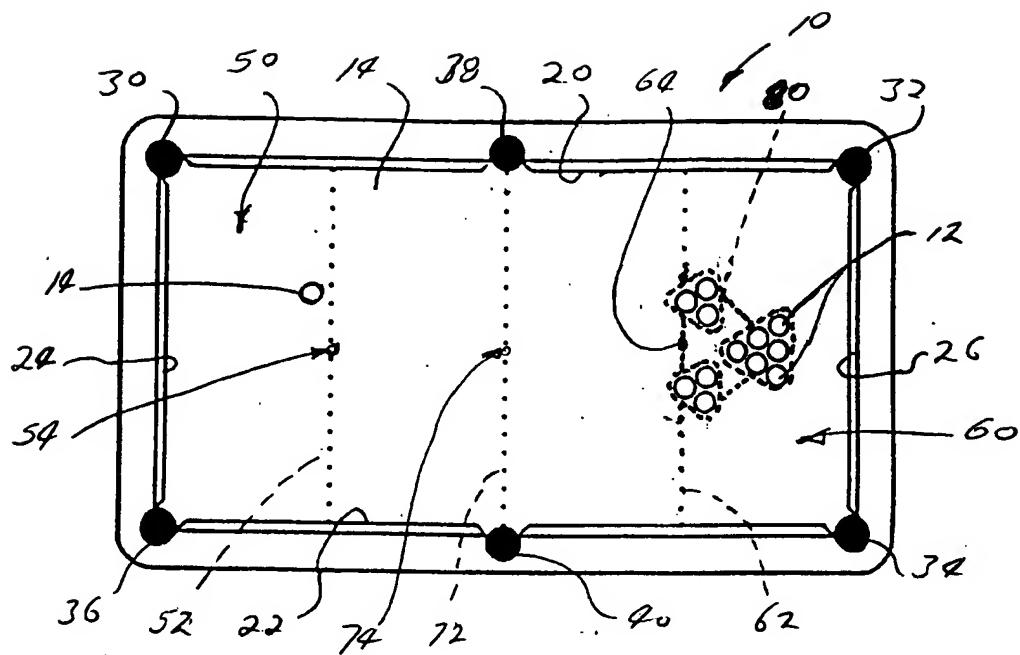
FIG.1
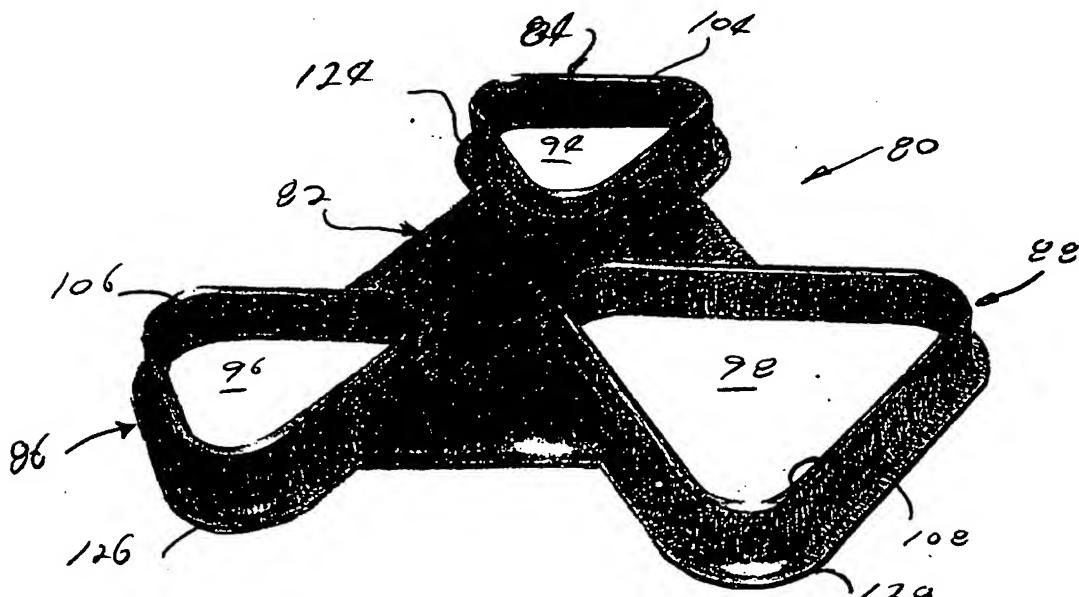
FIG.2

FIG 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 7

FIG. 8

FIG. 9
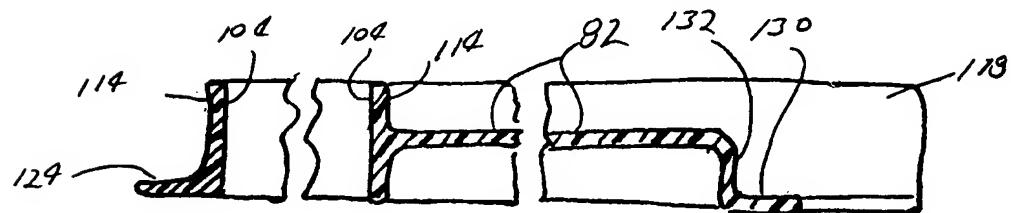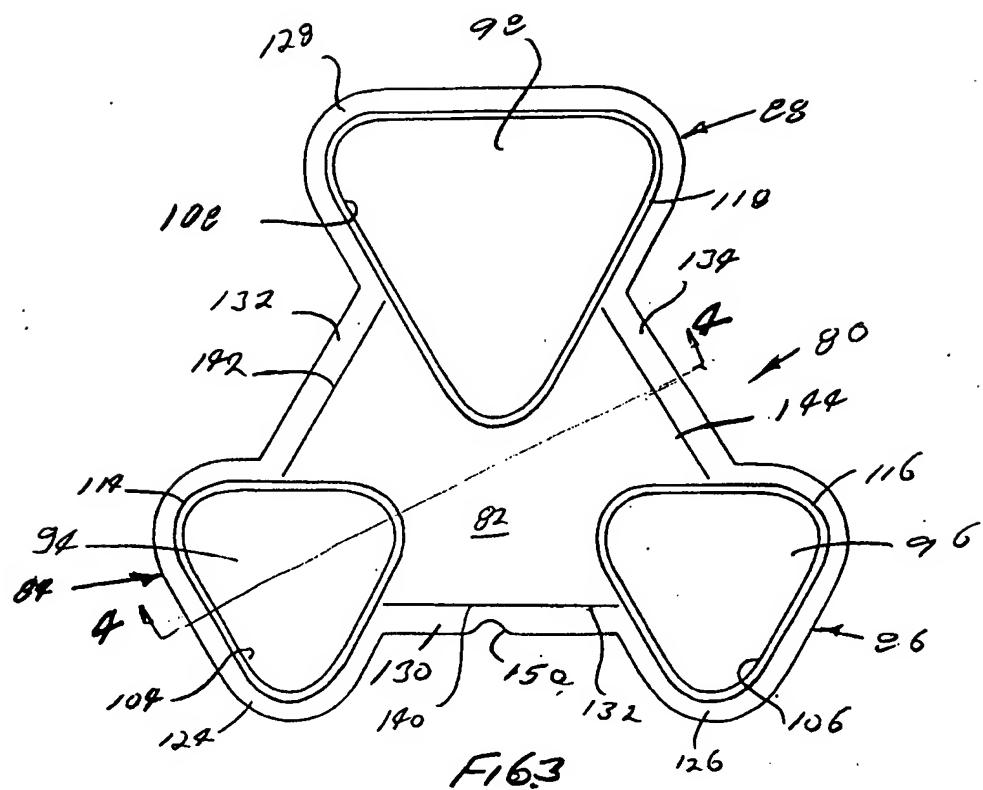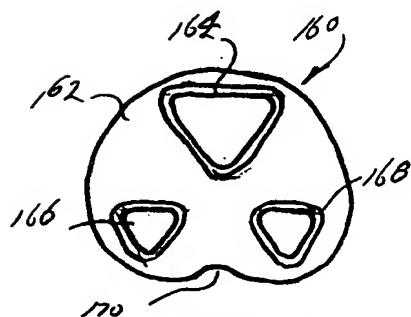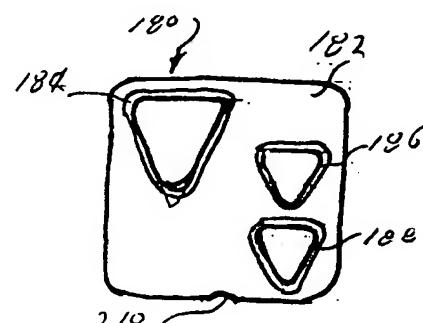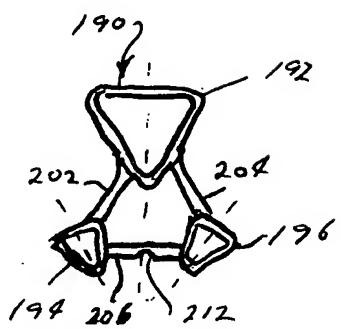
Finlayson & Singlehurst
PATENT AGENTS

FIG 5

FIG 6